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# Breastfed Babies

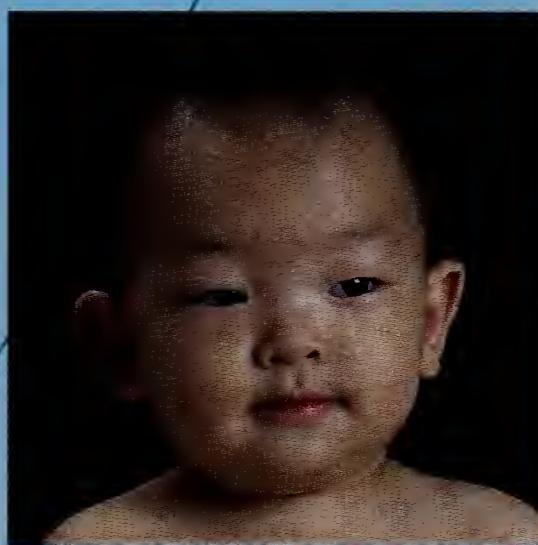
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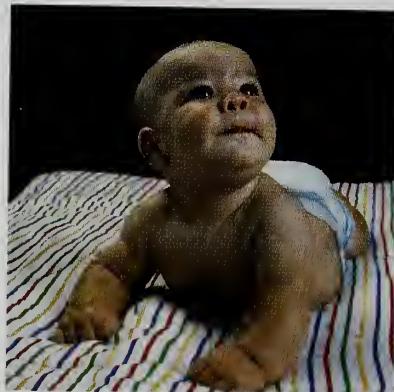
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A Guide for Child Care Providers

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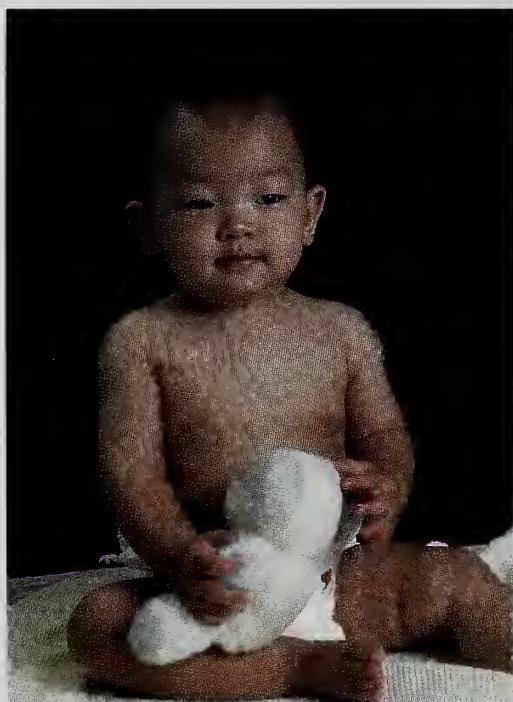
# Breastfeeding Is the Best Choice



- **Breastfeeding is good for babies because it:**
  - has just the right amounts of nutrients needed for a healthy start;
  - helps baby and mother develop a special closeness;
  - helps protect them from infections and delays allergies; and
  - is easy to digest;
- **Breastfeeding is good for mothers because it:**
  - helps them get their bodies back in shape after pregnancy;
  - helps them feel good about themselves;
  - takes less time than using infant formula; and
  - saves money.
- **Caring for breastfed babies is good for you as a child care provider because you have:**
  - babies with less colic and spitting up;
  - diapers that do not smell bad;
  - babies who are sick less often;
  - breastmilk that does not stain clothes; and
  - mothers who feel good about child care because they can continue to breastfeed their babies.
- **Breastfeeding helps everyone because it:**
  - leads to healthier people;
  - lowers food costs for families because of buying less infant formula; and
  - makes less trash and pollution because there are fewer cans, bottles, and nipples to throw away.



# Are Breastfed Babies Different?



- All babies have the same basic needs. They need to be warm, dry, fed, cuddled, and loved. There are a few things about breastmilk and the care of breastfed babies that you may want to know.

## • **Breastmilk**

Breastmilk has just the right mix of vitamins, minerals, and other important nutrients for most babies. There are also natural substances in breastmilk that help protect babies from infections. Breastmilk is easy for babies to digest and use, so breastfed babies have less vomiting and diarrhea.

Breastmilk varies in color from a bluish white to a deep yellow color. The fat part of the milk may rise to the top of the milk. This does not mean the milk is spoiled. Just shake it gently to mix the layers. Breastmilk may appear thinner than infant formula, especially if the fat has separated from the milk. Even if it looks thin, it is still the best food for babies. As with formula-fed babies, breastfed babies will need infant foods started after 4 to 6 months of age.

## • **Frequency of feedings**

Feed every baby, whether on breastmilk or formula, when he or she is hungry. This helps the baby feel secure. Early signs of hunger include:

- baby turning head and opening mouth wide in search of milk;



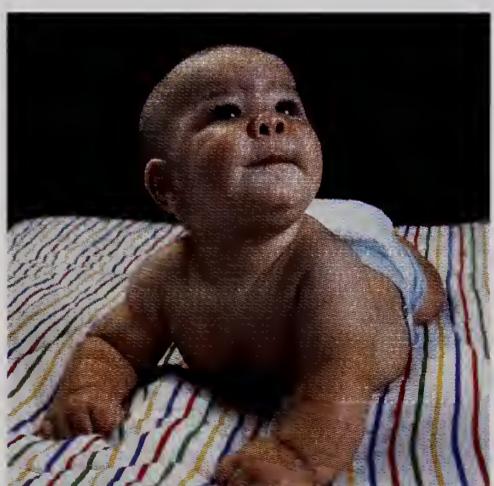
- baby putting hands to mouth or sucking on hands; and
- baby fussing or about to cry.

Follow the baby's signals to time the feedings. Do not put babies on a strict feeding schedule. Breastfed babies will usually eat every 1-1/2 to 3 hours in the first few months and every 3-4 hours after that.

As with all babies, breastfed babies go through growth spurts. During these spurts, babies may need more milk or need to eat more often.

### • **Bowel movements**

Bowel movements of breastfed babies do not smell bad. The bowel movements are pale in color, loose, and seedy looking. Sometimes people confuse them with diarrhea. In contrast, the bowel movements for formula-fed babies are darker and firmer with a less pleasant smell. Usually, breastfed babies have more bowel movements than formula-fed babies. As breastfed babies grow, however, they may have fewer bowel movements and even go for days without one. This is normal as long as the bowel movement is soft. Breastfed babies usually do not get constipated.



# Storage, Handling, and Warming of Breastmilk



- Breastmilk needs to be stored and handled safely to keep it from spoiling. Follow the specific health and safety regulations that are required in your State for safe food handling.

Remind mothers to **label**, **date**, and **chill** or **refrigerate** their breastmilk right after they express it. Ask mothers to bring the milk in hard plastic bottles, if possible.

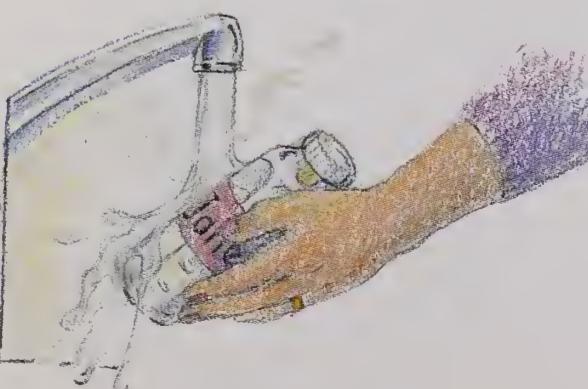
## • **Storing breastmilk**

Breastmilk can be stored in a refrigerator for up to 48 hours from the time it was expressed. Place breastmilk in the back of the refrigerator where it is coldest. Try to keep 2-3 ounces of breastmilk in your freezer in case the baby needs more milk one day. Breastmilk can be frozen for up to 3 months from when it was expressed. Rotate frozen breastmilk, using the oldest milk first. Once frozen breastmilk is thawed, use it within 24 hours and do not refreeze.

Breastmilk kept in the refrigerator but not used on the first day may be given on the following day. Always check the date of the breastmilk. Make sure that it is used within the 48 hours allowed for safe storage of fresh breastmilk or the 24 hours allowed for frozen milk that has been thawed. Throw away any breastmilk that has been stored too long.

## • **Handling breastmilk**

Ask mothers to bring in enough breastmilk to feed the baby each day. Be sure that each bottle or other container of breastmilk is labeled with the baby's name and the date the milk was



expressed. Bottles should have just the amount both you and the mother think the baby will take at each feeding. This amount will be about 2 to 4 ounces of breastmilk for the younger baby. As the baby gets older, the mother can put more breastmilk in each bottle. Keep breastmilk in the refrigerator or freezer until ready to use.

Always wash your hands before handling bottles or feeding the baby. Use only clean bottles, nipples, and cups. For babies that do not crawl, bottles and nipples should be sterilized. If you need to reuse them, sterilize by boiling in water for 5 minutes or by washing in a dishwasher.

### • **Thawing/Warming of breastmilk**

Thaw frozen breastmilk by running the container under cool water. Do not set breastmilk out to thaw at room temperature. **Do not thaw breastmilk by heating on the stove or in a microwave.**

Warm breastmilk by placing the bottle in a pan of warm water or by holding it under warm running water for a few minutes. **Do not warm breastmilk on the stove or in a microwave.** Microwave heating causes hot spots in the milk that can burn the baby's mouth and throat. These hot spots may stay even if you shake the bottle. Heating also destroys most of the natural substances in breastmilk that help protect babies from sickness.

# Feeding the Breastfed Baby



## • Ways of feeding the breastfed baby

Mothers may choose to have their breastfed babies fed in one of several ways when the baby is in child care including:

1. mother uses her breaks to come to the child care site at feeding times to nurse her baby;
2. child care provider gives baby the breastmilk that mother has expressed on a previous day; or
3. child care provider gives the baby infant formula prescribed by the baby's doctor.

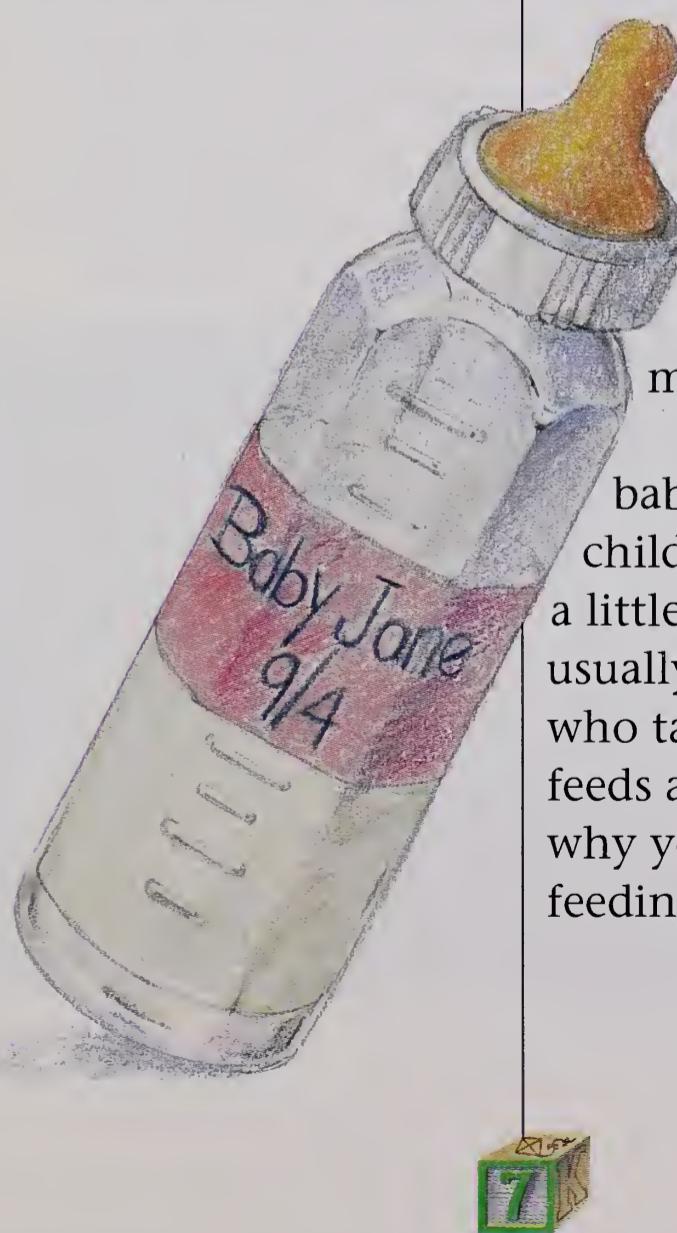
Follow the feeding method that the mother chooses. Feeding advice such as the use of infant formula should come from the baby's doctor or clinic.

Babies older than 6 months can also use a cup to drink breastmilk. Some mothers do not want their babies to have a bottle. Discuss with those mothers whether you have the time to feed their babies using a cup.

## • How to help breastfed babies get ready for child care

Breastfed babies need time to get used to a bottle. The mother should start giving a bottle when her baby is about a month old or about 2 weeks before the baby starts child





care. Ask the mother to bring her baby in for one or two short visits before she returns to work or school. This can help the mother and baby get used to child care. It can also give you a chance to practice feeding the baby.

### • Feeding

Encourage mothers to bring breastmilk in hard plastic bottles. Sometimes a mother may bring breastmilk in containers other than bottles. If this happens, pour into a bottle or cup only the amount that you think the baby will drink. Put the rest back in the refrigerator right away. This will avoid wasting breastmilk.

If any breastmilk is left in the bottle or cup after the feeding, throw it away.

The mother also should provide nipples that her baby will accept. A breastfed baby may not like a certain nipple because of feel or smell, so the mother may need to try different brands.

In adjusting to a new place, some babies take only a little milk the first day at child care. On the second day they will take a little more and by the third day they are usually feeding well. You may find a baby who takes only a little milk during the day but feeds a lot at home to make up for it. That is why you should always discuss the baby's feeding schedule with the parent(s).



### • Holding

Always hold the baby when bottle feeding. Try different positions for babies who do not want to take their bottles. Some babies are happier if you feed them in the usual cradle position. Others prefer a different position. **Do not prop up a bottle to feed a baby or let a baby go to bed with a bottle.** Bottle propping could cause the baby to choke, tooth decay, and ear infections.

### • Burping

Babies fed breastmilk in a bottle need to burp the same as with formula-fed babies. Burp by placing the baby high over your shoulder or over your knee. You can also lean the baby forward in a sitting position supported by your hands. Pat or rub the





baby's back. This puts gentle pressure on the abdomen to push extra air from the stomach. Breastmilk that comes up with a burp, unlike formula, does not stain.

### • Use of infant formula

Give infant formula only if the mother asks you to use it. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends iron-fortified infant formula until age 1 for any baby not receiving breastmilk. The choice of formula is one for the baby's doctor and the mother to make together.

### • Feeding infant foods

For the first 4 to 6 months of age, babies need only breastmilk or iron-fortified infant formula. As breastfed babies begin eating other foods, they may take less breastmilk. Discuss with parent(s) the foods you will be feeding the baby. Also, ask the parents to let you know when they give new foods to the baby at home.





# How Child Care Providers Can Help



- **Encourage mothers and offer your help**

You can help mothers breastfeed their babies if you:

- Talk about why breastfeeding is so good for babies.
- Tell them that you want to care for breastfed babies.
- Let them know that you want to give expressed breastmilk to their babies.
- Tell them about other places in the community they can go for help with breastfeeding.
- Give them *Breastfed Babies Welcome Here - A Mother's Guide* and discuss it with them.

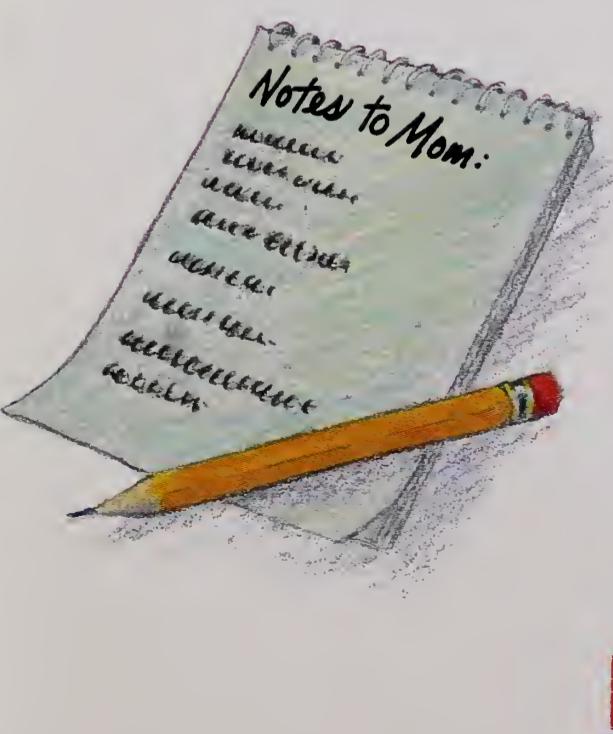
- **Respect parents' wishes**

All parents want to do what they think is best for their baby. Parents may have certain things they want you to do in caring for their baby. Ask parents:

- Do you want anything other than breastmilk (like formula or water) given to the baby?
- What will calm the baby when fussy (like a pacifier, toy, or music)?
- When will the baby begin eating infant foods, and what foods do you want fed to the baby?

Try to be flexible in working with parents about the care of their babies. Let parents know if their wishes conflict with what you





are required to do as a child care provider. Also, talk about how much time you have to do the things that they want done.

- **Time feedings to fit the mother's schedule**

Try to time the baby's feeding so the baby will be hungry when the mother is ready to nurse. Ask if the mother will be picking up the baby and if she wants to nurse before leaving. If she does, try to make the baby's last feeding about 1-1/2 to 2 hours before the mother arrives. Use an activity or toy to keep the baby happy until the mother gets there. You can also use a pacifier if the mother allows it.

- **Offer a place to nurse**

Offer mothers a quiet, comfortable, and private place to nurse when they come to pick up their babies. Some mothers have a long way to travel home. They may want to nurse before they leave child care. That way their babies will be content for the drive home.

- **Communicate with parents**

All parents like to know how their babies are doing. Each day write down how much the baby ate and when. Also write down the number of bowel movements and wet diapers. Tell parents if the baby was content, happy, fussy, etc. This helps parents know how their baby is doing. It also helps you to note when there are changes in the baby's daily routine.



# Resources for More Information

Contact your health department or licensing agency for information and training on infant feeding and breastfeeding. They can also answer questions about food and safety. Refer women to their doctor or clinic if they have questions on breastfeeding or want names of other people in the community who can help breastfeeding mothers.

## **Information available from U.S. Department of Agriculture**

Extra copies of the poster or mother's pamphlet, *Breastfed Babies Welcome Here*, or the entire packet are available. The booklet *Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Care Food Program*, may also be useful to you. It discusses how to introduce infant foods. It also explains the infant meal plan

requirements. These materials are available from your Child and Adult Care Food Program State agency or by writing to:

**Nutrition and Technical Services Division  
Food and Nutrition Service, USDA**  
3101 Park Center Drive  
Room 609  
Alexandria, VA 22302  
(703) 305-2554

## **Other information on breastfeeding and child care**

*Caring for Our Children - National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs*, American Public Health Association and American Academy of Pediatrics; Washington, D.C., and Elk Grove Village, Illinois, 1992. Cost \$50.

Available from:

**American Public Health Association**  
1015 Fifteenth St., NW  
Washington, DC 20005

## **National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care**

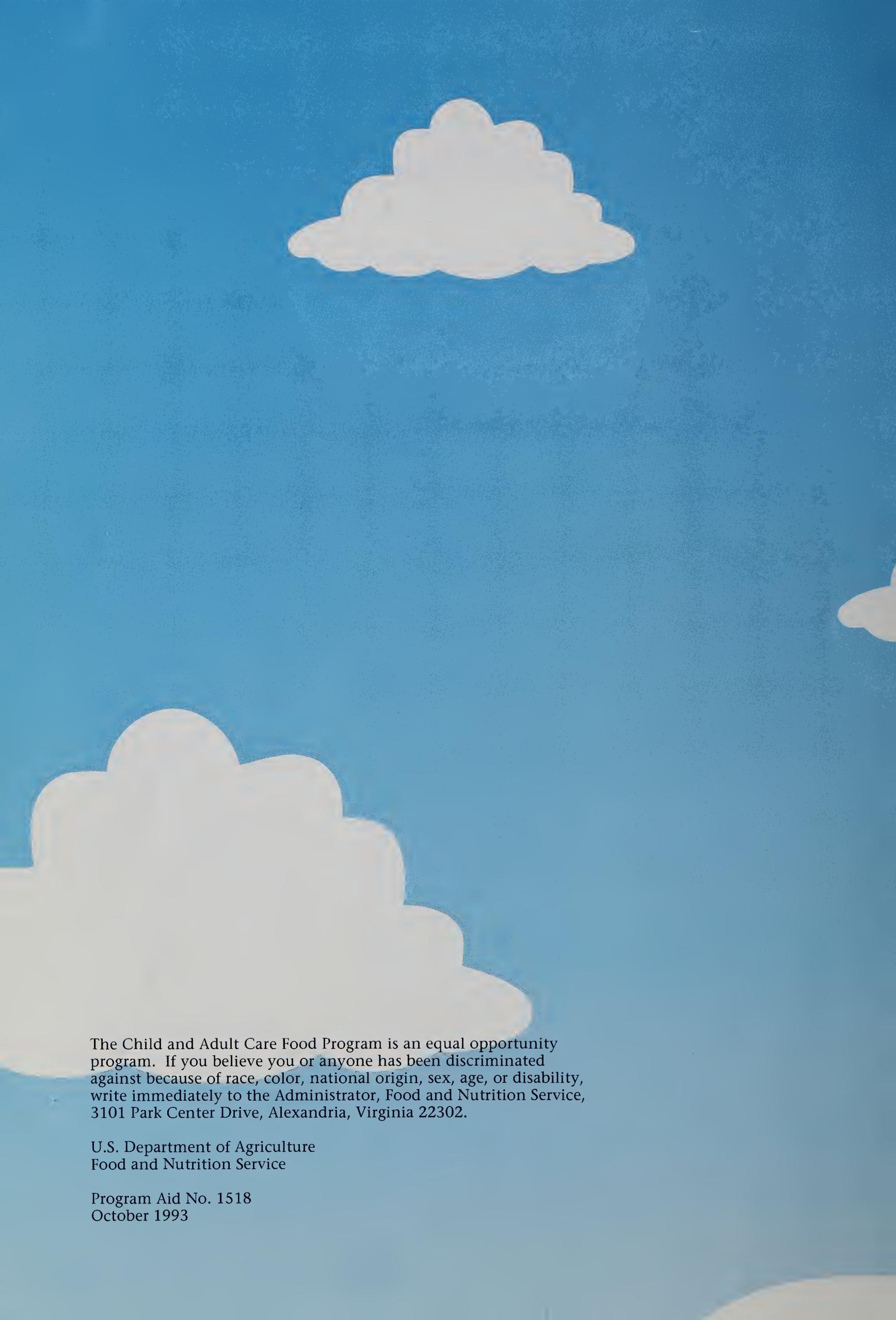
**National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health**  
Georgetown University  
2001 Fifteenth St. North  
Suite 701  
Arlington, VA 22201-2617  
(703) 524-7802

*The Breastfed Infant in the Child Care Setting*, a package that includes training materials, videos, and other support materials, by Karen Runner, Denver, Colorado, 1993. Single copies available free from:

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The Child and Adult Care Food Program is an equal opportunity program. If you believe you or anyone has been discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, write immediately to the Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302.

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Food and Nutrition Service

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